

E - 61,290

DEC 15 1978

P. Diehl, Kemper
CIA 10/11/78, George
Org. Chamber of Commerce

Bush: Nation needs CIA

By KEMPER DIEHL

After spending 11 months as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, George Bush is dead certain "it is a national asset

that must be preserved."

But he warned San Antonio's business leaders

Tuesday that the agency is under constant attack from "the left" at home and

from hostile governments abroad.

Bush was the main speaker at the 82nd annual meeting of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce at the Convention Center.

"Almost daily around the world," said the former Texas congressman and U.N. ambassador, "this agency of tremendous importance to the United States is under attack."

Bush told the banquet guests that there is a "willful conspiracy to name the agents and employees of the CIA willing to serve their country abroad."

He termed this action "despicable."

The director cited attacks "from the far left" inside the U. S. and specifically cited "the publication 'Counterspy' as 'vicious' and 'mean.'"

The retiring CIA chief cited foreign attacks which spread "vicious untruths" from publications and broadcasts based in the Soviet Union and Cuba.

So far-fetched have some charges against the CIA been stretched, he said, that the agency has even been accused of harboring away "the relics of Noah's Ark."

The danger of the assault against the agency can only be judged when its service to the nation is considered, Bush said.

CIA strong

He declared that accurate intelligence on such matters as Russian crop conditions, nuclear proliferation, the movements of terrorist groups, the oil pricing plans of the OPEC countries and leadership changes in China, is essential for presidential decision-making.

Despite the attacks, Bush said, the agency is strong and its recruitment is up. "We are attracting young people of character and ability," he reported.

Bush said the agency was living fully within the law and reporting to no less than seven Congressional committees.

He reported that he had made 48 appearances on Capitol Hill during his 11 months on the job.

The banquet was the occasion for the installation of Holt Atherton as chairman of the board of the chamber.

Undecided

Outgoing chairman Ralph Langley discussed the free enterprise education program and the expansion of the chamber's public affairs staff to enable more participation in governmental processes.

Bush, who has resigned his post as head of the CIA effective at the close of the Ford administration, told reporters that he hasn't decided what he will do when he leaves the agency.

He said he does plan to return to Houston where he served as a two-term congressman before losing a race for senator and then taking a succession of high governmental posts.

But he hasn't decided whether to engage in business or politics when he returns to Texas.

But he said he was convinced of one thing. He is proud of the people he worked with in the CIA, saying "they served with selflessness in the most difficult of times."